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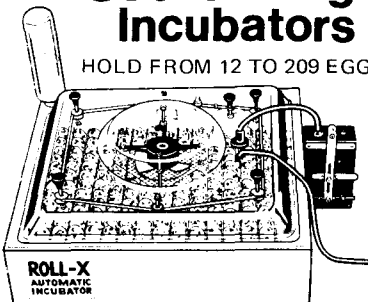
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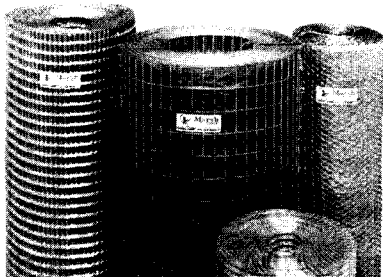
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Canary Culture

by Tony Bucci

THE CLASSIC MELANINS

Melanin canaries, also referred to as "Self" canaries, are dark in appearance. The pigment that colors their feathers is called melanin. This melanistic group is divided in the following four classic types: Black-Brown (green), Brown (cinnamon), Agate (green dilute), and Isabel (cinnamon dilute). The terms in parenthesis are old names, and still used in some canary circles.

The Black-Brown or traditionally named "green" is the original color of the canary found in the wild. Its color is green that leans to gray color. The color constitutes combination of "eumelanin black", "pheomelanin brown", "yellow lipochromes" and small amount of "Eumelanin brown".

The combination of the above mentioned pigments is what gives the illusion of green color. When large amounts of the yellow carotenoid are present, the greener the feathers appear to be. Therefore this green feather will assume smaller size, and will be referred to, as hard feather or non frost.

The term Black-Brown (green) is used only to describe yellow ground canary. Where changes have occurred in ground color, terminology changes.

1. Recessive and dominant white ground becomes "Blue".
2. Red-Orange ground becomes "Bronze".

The Brown (cinnamon) canary is a first known mutation. The existence of this canary goes back as early as 1700.

The effects of the mutation influenced the color of the plumage. This change appears to eliminate the "black eumelanin"; thus leaving the plumage to appear brown. The effects of mutation also changes the original dark color of the legs, feet and beak to flesh color.

The brown is a recessive sex-linked

character. The term Brown (cinnamon) is used only to describe yellow ground canary. When changes occur in ground color, terminology changes.

1. Recessive and dominant white ground becomes "Silver Brown" (fawn).
2. Red-Orange ground becomes "Red-Orange-Brown" (copper).

Agate (green dilute) canary appeared in Holland in early 1900. This mutation also effects the color of the plumage. This time, the "pheomelanin brown" appears to vanish, leaving only the "black eumelanin". The bird now, appears gray with black penciling on its' back. The legs, feet and beak change from the original black color to flesh color. Again as with "Black-Brown" and "Brown", "Agate" is used only to describe yellow ground. In other ground colors, terminology will be modified.

1. Recessive and dominant white ground becomes "Silver-Agate".
2. Red-Orange ground becomes "Red-Orange Agate".

Isabel (cinnamon dilute) canary is the last of the four classic colors. Isabel is simply another step of dilution. The plumage of Isabel and penciling on its' back will appear very light brown. The "Black Eumelanin" is not visible and quantity of "Brown Eumelanin" is not visible and quantity of "Brown Pheomelanin" is minimal. Isabel is used to describe yellow ground. To describe other ground color terminology is as follows:

1. Recessive and dominant white ground becomes "Silver Isabel".
2. Red-Orange ground becomes "Red-Orange-Isabel".

In addition to the three ground colors,

we can add other factors to the four classic colors. The additional factors are: Opal, Ivory, Ino, Satinette, and Pastel. These mutated factors, all have diluting effect upon the original melanins.

Below are some of the possible combinations.

Yellow Ground
 Green-Ivory-Opal
 Gold-Agate-Ivory-Opal
 Gold-Brown-Ivory-Opal
 Gold-Isabel-Ivory-Opal
 Green-Ino
 Gold-Brown-Ino
 Gold-Brown-Satinette

NOTE: "Gold" may be added naming "yellow ground".

Red-Orange Ground
 Red-Orange-Brown-Ivory-Opal
 Red-Orange-Agate-Ivory-Opal
 Red-Orange-Brown-Ivory-Opal
 Red-Orange-Isabel-Ivory-Opal
 Red-Orange-Brown-Ino
 Red-Orange-Brown-Satinette

White Ground
 Blue-Ivory-Opal
 Silver-Brown-Ivory-Opal
 Silver-Agate-Ivory-Opal
 Silver-Isabel-Ivory-Opal
 Silver-Brown-Ino
 Silver-Brown-Satinette

To conclude we can state: the four classic colors: Green, Brown, Agate, and Isabel are the basic building blocks of the New Color canary. Also, the melanin canary is one of the classic colors first, and then whatever the additional factors we add to it.

I experimented with all of the above mentioned colors and factors. My findings are; when too many dilution factors are added to the basic color they destroy (mask) the original classic color to the point where original colors are not recognizable. The melanins are totally gone (except the underfeather) and the bird appears to be lipochrome (clear). My opinion is; keep the classic melanins as simple as possible, add some type, and you'll have beautiful recognizable color bred canaries.

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